GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:914
ANSWERED ON:24.02.2003
RECEDING OF GLACIERS
RATTAN LAL KATARIA

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether glaciers of Himalayas are receding due to rise in temperature; and

(b) if so, the preventive steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to save glaciers?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SMT. BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY)

(a) The recession of Glaciers, which is a worldwide phenomenon, is a natural process sensitive to climatic fluctuations wherein the rise in global average temperature (called global warming) results in melting of glaciers in extents varying with their locations and orientations with respect to the sunshine and seasons. Studies carried out by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) have revealed that the Glaciers in the Himalayan Region are receding gradually. As per the inventory of Himalayan Glaciers prepared by the GSI, there are over 7500 glaciers (big and small) in the Indian part of the Himalaya. The studies carried out in certain selected glaciers in the Himalayan Region have indicated that these glaciers are passing through a phase of recession. The recession of the glaciers does not necessarily mean rapid melting of the glacier due to rise in temperature. Even the reduction in the snowfall in the catchment area may cause recession of the glacier. The rate of recession in different climatic zones of the Himalaya is found to be in different years.

(b) The measures to reduce the effect of human interference on glaciers include conservation activities such as afforestation, removal of garbage and promotion of sustainable eco-tourism.